

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 PC-10 OMB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

OPR-02 DRC-01 /114 W

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O P 061735Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2355

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1289

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: ELECTION REPORT NUMBER 21

1. MORNING PRESS MARCH 6 CARRIED FOLLOWING REPORTS OF
INTEREST:

A. LAUGERUD HELD PRESS CONFERENCE AT ABOUT 1930 MARCH
5 AFTER ELECTORAL REGISTRY RELEASE OF RESULTS OVER TV/RADIO
NET (SEE REPORT NUMBER 20). LAUGERUD DID NOT, HOWEVER,
APPEAR ON TV. HE SAID HE HAD NOT MADE STATEMENT BEFORE
RELEASE OF "OFFICIAL RETURNS" IN ORDER NOT TO "DEFRAUD"
PEOPLE. "WE HAVE RECEIVED," HE SAID, "ONLY A RELATIVE
MAJORITY" AND THUS CONGRESS WILL HAVE TO ELECT
NEXT PRESIDENT. HE LAMENTED "CLIMATE OF ILLEGALITY"
CREATED BY DCG BY PUBLISHING "FALSE" DATA AND CALLING
ITSELF THE VICTOR. HE SAID THAT IF THERE ARE PROVOCATIONS,
"WE WILL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM ON THE LEVEL THEY DESIRE."
HE ALSO SAID THAT HE AND FOLLOWERS HAD KEPT CALM IN THE
CONFIDENCE THAT THEY HAD THE "PEOPLE'S" SUPPORT. MLN
LEADER AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SANDOVAL THEN SAID,
AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT IF "RIOS THREATENS TO GO TO THE
STREETS, WE ARE READY."

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B. RIOS ALSO HELD PRESS CONFERENCE A LITTLE BEFORE 2000 LAST NIGHT (MARCH 5). HE ATTACKED COALITION ANNOUNCEMENT OF RETURNS THROUGH ELECTORAL REGISTRY WHICH HAD, HE SAID, "THE GALL TO ASSERT THAT RELATIVE POSITION OF CANDIDATES WOULD NOT CHANGE ON THE BASIS OF ONLY 33 PER CENT OF THE VOTE." HE SAID THAT THE "PARTY OF ORGANIZED VIOLENCE" (READ MLN) HAD PUBLICLY REVEALED ITS INTENTION TO CARRY THROUGH WITH FRAUD, USING NATIONAL TV/RADIO NET IMPOSED ON THE MEDIA. HE REFERRED TO HIS MEETING WITH ARANA MONDAY NIGHT IN WHICH HE HAD "RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT VOTE COUNT WOULD BE STRICTLY LEGAL" AND HAD THUS "RECEIVED ANNOUNCEMENT OF MLN AS A DESPERATE, LAST PLOY (DESPLANTE) TO STAY IN POWER, IMPOVERISHING AND COVERING COUNTRY WITH BLOOD FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS." IN REPUDIATING MLN FRAUD, RIOS CALLED ELECTORAL REGISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT A "PROVOCATION INTENDED TO FORCE PEOPLE TO REACT VIOLENTLY." "WE WILL NOT PLAY THAT GAME," HE SAID, CLOSING PRESS CONFERENCE BY SAYING, "WE WILL GAIN POWER THROUGH LEGAL MEANS WITHOUT PERMITTING THE SHEDDING OF MORE BLOOD."

C. REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, AFTER MAKING KNOWN THAT THEIR CALCULATIONS INDICATED RIOS HAD WON, SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED COMMUNIQUE CALLING FOR NULLIFICATION OF ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF MULTIPLE IRREGULARITIES.

D. PRESS ALSO CARRIED OFFICIAL FRONT FUNERAL NOTICE FOR THREE POLL WATCHERS KILLED IN ZACAPA ON ELECTION DAY (REFERRED TO IN RIOS DECLARATION SUMMARIZED IN REPORT NUMBER 17). FUNERAL NOTICE DESCRIBED THREE AS "VILELY ASSASSINATED WHILE DEFENDING THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS." FRONT CALLED ON "OUR PARTISANS, FRIENDS, AND ALL THE GUATEMALAN PEOPLE" TO JOIN FUNERAL PROCESSION TODAY AT 1500 "IN REPUDIATION OF THIS ABOMINABLE CRIME."

2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH LAUGERUD MUST FEEL PERSONALLY UNEASY ABOUT THE ROLE INTO WHICH HE IS BEING CAST BY THE GOG'S PLANS FOR GROSS FRAUD, LAST NIGHT'S PRESS CONFERENCE INDICATES THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED HIS ASSIGNED ROLE. IN THIS DRAMA, LAUGERUD WILL HAVE "STOLEN" THE ELECTION FROM HIS COMRADE IN ARMS FOR 30 YEARS AND WILL HEAD A GOVERNMENT

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WITH A VERY LOW PROPORTION OF POPULAR SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY IN THE CAPITAL CITY. RIOS MONTT HAS VERY WISELY CHOSEN A PEACEFUL, LEGAL ROUTE TO PROTEST GOG'S FRAUD, AVOIDING CONFRONTATION WHICH MIGHT JUSTIFY IN GOG'S MIND FORCEFUL REPRESSION. THIS AFTERNOON'S FUNERAL MARCH FOR SLAIN FRONT POLL WATCHERS WILL BE FIRST SERIOUS TEST OF THIS POLICY. MELOY

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